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EPA Announces \$300,000 for Southern Louisiana Brownfield Sites

Funds are part of \$6.9 million awarded nationwide

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DALLAS - (June 12, 2020) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced Louisiana's South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) will receive a \$300,000 Revolving Loan Fund for its South Louisiana Brownfields Coalition. The grant is part of \$6.9 million in supplemental funding EPA is providing for 25 current successful Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (Revolving Loan) grantees.

The SCPDC Brownfields Coalition will focus the supplemental funding to complete several existing projects. These include the Lafayette Courthouse Development, turning three buildings into a mixed-use facility with 66 multi-family units and 23,700 square feet of commercial space; the Lenox-Hotard American Legion cleanup to provide further services to the elderly and veteran community; the Joseph J. Cefalu Power Plant, for reuse by the city of Morgan Public Works operations; and the St. Luc French Immersion and Cultural Campus, for reuse as a business incubator and French cultural center.

"The South Central Planning and Development Commission continuously shows creativity and foresight in selecting properties for Brownfields funding and transforming them for new purposes," said **Regional Administrator Ken McQueen**. "This funding will allow them to continue their work of creating new economic assets for the benefit of many South Louisiana parishes and communities."

"SCPDC is pleased to be selected as one of the grantees for EPA's Brownfields RLF grant. Through the \$300,000 award of the supplemental funding, the pursuit of cleanup planning and implementation will continue throughout our South Louisiana Brownfields Coalition RLF program's regional area," said **Chief Executive Officer Kevin Belanger**. "EPA's great relationship and continued support have allowed us to sustain a continual source of funding for our committed and potential brownfields cleanup activities and ongoing management of our RLF program. Throughout our past and continuing coordination with EPA, we thank you for the support of SCPDC's Brownfields Coalition RLF program initiative and look forward to revitalizing our communities!"

All communities receiving supplemental funds have census tracts designated as federal Opportunity Zones within their jurisdiction. An Opportunity Zone is an economically distressed community where new investment, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Most often, those who reside near these sites are low-income, minority, and disadvantaged Americans. When coupled with leveraged funds, such as other Brownfield grants or Opportunity Funds, Revolving Loans can be a powerful tool for revitalizing a community of need.

When Revolving Loans are repaid, the loan amount is returned to the fund and lent to other borrowers, providing an ongoing source of capital within a community. To date, EPA's Revolving Loan grantees across the country have completed 759 cleanups and attracted approximately 45,000 jobs and \$8.4 billion in public and private funding.

Background

A brownfield is a property where the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. There are estimated to be more than 450,000 brownfields in the U.S.

Grants awarded by EPA's Brownfields Program provide communities across the country with an opportunity to transform contaminated sites into community assets that attract jobs and achieve broader economic development outcomes while taking advantage of existing infrastructure. Under President Trump, over 70% of the communities selected for Brownfields grants in 2019 were located in Opportunity Zones. Brownfields grants have been shown to:

- **Increase Local Tax Revenue:** A study of 48 brownfield sites found that an estimated \$29 million to \$97 million in additional local tax revenue was generated in a single year after cleanup. This is two to seven times more than the \$12.4 million EPA contributed to the cleanup of these sites.
- **Increase Residential Property Values:** Another study found that property values of homes near revitalized brownfield sites increased between 5% and 15% following cleanup.

As of February 2020, under the EPA Brownfields Program, 31,516 properties have been assessed and 92,047 acres of idle land have been made ready for productive use. In addition, communities have been able to use Brownfields grants to attract 160,306 jobs and more than \$31 billion of public and private funding.

The 2021 National Brownfields Training Conference will be held on April 26-30, 2021 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Offered every two years, this conference is the largest gathering of stakeholders focused on cleaning up and reusing formerly utilized commercial and industrial properties. EPA cosponsors this event with the International City/County Management Association.

For more on EPA's Brownfields Program: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

For more on Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grants: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding>

For more information on Opportunity Zones: <https://www.epa.gov/opportunity-zones>

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